

Congressional Connection Newsletter Content

Winter 2013 – 2014

CRWC

District 3

Congressman Tipton

RR/ME/WE/SW/PB

In January, the Leadville WFC staff, in partnership with Lake County High School sophomore class, assisted students with their “work internship” studies. Students completed a profile on CollegeInColorado to determine what vocation they are interested in and worked with KeyTrain modules of Career Skills such as work ethic, business etiquette and communication, time management, and others. Each class consisted of approximately 20 students. The staff also attended the Colorado Mountain College-Timberline Campus Community Services Fair, providing students the opportunity to learn of community resources and about workforce services and programs. Eight new registrations were completed during the event to assist with the students’ job search.

The Edwards staff attended the High Country Human Resources Association Board retreat to assist in planning the coming year’s programs and focus. Regional Board members in attendance included human resource representatives from five businesses in the area. The group consists of members from all over the state and meets to plan programs for the coming year.

Workforce centers sponsored a Social Media Marketing roundtable for employers in Leadville, Frisco, Edwards, and Glenwood Springs in cooperation with Colorado Mountain College and three different subject matter experts. A total of 73 employer representatives attended. Attendees were presented information on digital marketing and how best to use the tools available. Response was very good and another session may be planned for the future.

Frisco Youth staff presented information regarding workforce services and programs to the Business class at Eagle Valley High School. Twenty students registered for work, learned about KeyTrain and CareerReady Colorado certificates; and, learned about efficient and effective techniques of job search, resumes, and interviewing. All twenty students have been registered into KeyTrain and will begin the classwork to enhance basic work skills and attain the CareerReady Colorado certificate by the end of this semester.

Planning has begun for the 2014 Lake County Career Fair which is tentatively scheduled for April 24, 2014. The Career Fair is a very large event with 100-120 presenters and approximately 500 high school and college student attending at previous events. Leadville workforce center staff play a huge part of the event in the actual planning, recruitment of students and presenters, and set up and staffing.

Staff in the county offices of Garfield, Eagle, Summit, Pitkin and Lake are contacting 1623 job seekers who recently lost extended unemployment benefits or ran out of benefits on a regular claim. Staff are providing these job seekers with information regarding all of the services their local workforce center can provide and encouraging them to discuss their employment goals with us for individualized guidance, services, and links to available workforce or community resources.

Several presentations have been made throughout the Rural Resort region to establish and renew partnerships for providing services to our Veterans. The Veterans Administration TeleHealth Clinic in Glenwood Springs, American Legion Post #100 in Carbondale, Summit County Human Services, Steamboat Springs Veterans of Foreign Wars post commander, and Routt County Human Services all received information regarding workforce priority of service and other services and programs we can provide to Veterans.

A Southwest Workforce Development Network meeting was held with the topic focused on the progress the southwest region has made toward reaching the Colorado Blueprint Regional Objectives/Goals. Workforce staff assisted Economic Development in presenting this information to the employers who attended.

On January 17, 2014 an Ag Sector Launch Meeting was held with 25 individuals in attendance. The group was selected to be as diverse as possible including geography and area of expertise to identify opportunities for the Ag industry as well as constraints were identified by the group.

Cortez Workforce staff participated in the grand opening event, including the ribbon cutting on January 17 for Four Corners Welding. With the new expansion, Four Corners Welding relies on the Workforce Center for all of their hiring needs.

Southwest Region San Juan Board of Cooperative Educational Services, local high schools, Fort Lewis College, local employers and the Durango Workforce Center staff worked collaboratively to put on a very successful Youth Career Fair on January 09, 2014 at Fort Lewis College. Over 1,300 students were bused in from Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, Cortez, Pagosa Springs and Silverton. The 90 presenters and moderators were made up of local professionals. Positive feedback was given by all. The presenters stated the students were very engaged and asked pertinent questions throughout the different workshops. Students stated the presentations were very informative and interesting. Due to the success of this fair, the organizers plan to duplicate these efforts next year.

A Durango Workforce staff was invited to be a part of the newly created LaPlata County Economic Development Business Development Committee. This committee's vision is that the alliance will make La Plata County the premier Rocky Mountain destination to start, own and grow business, while enjoying a superior quality of life. Workforce development will be a valuable addition to this group.

Health and Wellness Sector Partnership continues to move forward in the Western Region. The partnership formed three subgroups to address talent development, activation/education/promotion and systems/infrastructure. The local subgroups met in January and developed action steps to be presented to the entire group in March.

The Advanced Manufacturing Sector partnership will be launched in March 2014 and will be the second sector partnership to be launched in the region. The Western's Region Sector Partnership group continues to make significant progress in launching additional sector partnerships. The advanced manufacturing and health and wellness sectors have successfully launched with the Food and Agriculture sector and energy partnership scheduled to be launched by this fall.

The Western Region's Fatherhood Grant in cooperation with Montrose Health and Human Services will

be recognizing area employers that have participated in the program and have provided workplace internships in the Delta, Montrose and Ridgway areas. A Certificate of Appreciation will be awarded employers by Montrose Health and Human Services and Western Workforce Centers. Local media coverage will be coordinated through Montrose Health and Human Service and CDLE.

Staff attended the Delta County (Paonia) Community Town meeting organized by State Senator Schwartz to provide information on Colorado Workforce resources and services for laid off coal miners. Western Region Delta County continues to struggle with the recent layoffs in the coal industry. Over 300 miners have lost their jobs in the last year primarily to the Oxbow Mine closure. Additional layoffs in the coal mining industry are possible in the near future. The Colorado Workforce Centers have partnered with economic development and community based organizations to assist miners with retraining and relocation assistance.

Montrose Workforce Center staff assisted in the Ouray County Resource Fair for miners and community members seeking information on local resources. The event was sponsored by Ouray County Commissioner Lynn Padgett.

Fifty-one participants were served for Spring Semester enrollment by Pueblo staff and 2,014 at the local colleges. Participants are attending Colorado State University-Pueblo, Otero Junior College, and Pueblo Community College. In addition, seventeen new participants were enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act program in January.

Business Services Unit staff presented Workforce Center and Business Services to the Pueblo Synergy Group. This is made up of local small businesses having no more than five employees each. Eight businesses were represented; several businesses expressed interest in participating in services.

In January, Pueblo Business Services Unit staff has contacted the Human Resources staff at Colorado State University-Pueblo and are in weekly contact in reference to their budget and lay-off situations. With an effective lay-off date of June 30, 2014, both staffs have been pro-active in creating resources for affected staff. Currently 22 workers may be affected.

The Pueblo Workforce Center Youth team facilitated a recruitment event at Pueblo Centennial High School for the YouthWorks program and Career Exploration Academy. Several students were recruited.

Pueblo Workforce Center Business Services Unit staff provided two on-site recruitment events for Pewag, an Austrian-based chain manufacturing company, which is opening a plant in Pueblo. More than fifty job seekers participated in the events which consisted of an orientation to the company, skills assessments using both the Ramsay Combined Basic Skills Assessment and Prove-It, and completion and screening of the job seeker's applications. Pewag is initially hiring eleven new employees and will continue to hire until they reach their full staffing level.

Pueblo Workforce Center staff assisted with the Pueblo West Community Information Night at Prairie Winds Elementary School and staff provided information to the community regarding the services offered. The Youth team also facilitated a recruitment event at Pueblo East High School for the

YouthWorks program and Career Exploration Academy.

The quarterly meeting of the Southern Colorado Manufacturing Group was coordinated by the Pueblo Workforce Center Business Services Unit. Staff attended by representatives from 18 manufacturing companies as well as workforce, economic development and education representatives, was also used as a “micro summit” for HB1165 (Manufacturing Career Pathway) and the Colorado Helps Advanced Manufacturing Project (CHAMP). The micro summit was utilized to gather and validate labor market information concerning manufacturing occupations and potential training programs.

The grant received in partnership with Department of Health and Human Services /Catholic Charities officially kicked off the ReHire program aimed at recruiting 75 participants for work experience placements to result in employment. The program’s case manager providing technical assistance to the grant recipients is housed at the Pueblo Workforce Center.

The Pueblo Workforce Center Supervisor co-presented at an event called Fostering Futures at CASA. Youth in this program are foster children who have been deemed at-risk and are assigned to CASA who advocates on their behalf. In partnership with the Human Resource Manager at Vestas, the supervisor presented job search skills, provided an overview of an organization called Code.org where they can learn how to program, as well as an overview of community resources on the Pueblo Youth Council.

The Pueblo Youth team met with Partners in Education (PIE) regarding the Pueblo Youth Future Fair that will be held on May 13, 2014. Local high school juniors and seniors will have the opportunity to hear a motivational speaker, attend career pathway sessions, and attend a business expo. The YouthWorks team will be participating in the expo and will be recruiting businesses to participate.

The Manufacturing-Education Partnership project, facilitated by Pueblo Workforce Center Business Services Unit staffs, is working on the development of a manufacturing pathway from secondary education to either employment or post-secondary education and consists of activities such as company tours, a two-week summer “manufacturing institute”, mentorships, and a technical challenge for the students involved. This project has received funding support from several manufacturing companies as well as a local foundation. The group is planning a “technical/vocational education” focused roundtable in April, 2014.

The Pueblo YouthWorks Team recruited 12 participants for the Career Exploration Academy, which started on February 10, 2014 at Pueblo Community College. Participants are receiving information and hands-on experience in a wide variety of careers and are also working on basic skills, soft skills, and financial literacy.

In Pueblo YouthWorks enrolled 17 new participants, 4 entered into GED instruction, 2 graduated from Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training and 2 passed the CNA state board test.

Pueblo Workforce Center hosted Lowe’s Home Improvement for a hiring event on February 25, 2014. During the four-hour event, Lowe’s hiring managers, interviewed 66 candidates for the 58 seasonal positions they currently have available.

A need from business to validate the skills of candidates for their positions hires resulted in the Pueblo Workforce Center staff administering sixty Prove It assessments in a broad range of skill areas during the month of February.

District 4

Congressman Gardner

SE/EA

January has begun with planning for the Southeast Youth Career Conference and is underway after being awarded a Youth Grant that will fund the conference. The conference will be a 1-day conference where youth will gain knowledge about careers in Health Care, Early Childhood Education, Finance, Hospitality, Law Enforcement and Corrections. The conference will be held in La Junta, CO and will accommodate approximately 200 youth from seven counties who have been invited to attend. In addition, some youth who qualify under the Workforce Investment Act will be able to complete a 16-hour internship with a local business and potentially qualify to be co-enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program.

During the month of January Pueblo Community College conducted a Mig and Stick Welding Class in their new mobile lab at the Walsenburg Workforce Center. After the completion of the class each student will receive a mini certificate for attending the class.

Southeast Region staff presented four Rapid Response presentations to approximately 35 employees of FulCircle, a telemarketing call center in La Junta, Colorado in January and February. FulCircle closed its doors in February and a total of approximately 75 workers were affected. The Rapid Response presentation addressed how to apply for unemployment insurance benefits, what to expect during the process and a question and answer session after the video followed by a facilitator lead layoff transition workshop. The availability of local community services is discussed with brochures presented from Otero Junior College, Southeast Behavioral Health Group and the Otero County Department of Human Services. The workshop is always presented in an interactive format with questions frequently being solicited from the group by the facilitator; attendees are reminded often that the services of the Workforce Center are always available if someone would rather discuss a subject individually. Another workshop is scheduled for February 11th.

Southeast Region staff presented a Rapid Response presentation to eleven employees of Alco, a retail store in Lamar, Colorado on January 14. Staff scheduled four other agencies to participate and speak about programs that they have available to those affected. Representatives from the Department of Social Services, High Plains Community Health Center, Lamar Community College, and Southeast Mental Health Services all took part. Initially Alco was going to close their doors by the end of January however that date has been extended and they do not have an exact closure date at this time.

At the Southern Colorado Farmworkers Services Coalition meeting, the Southeast Colorado Workforce Center along with 11 other agencies provided reports. A continued request from the Workforce Center staff was made to the coalition to refer individuals to the Workforce Center if they have been long term unemployed. There is a possibility they may be eligible for the Workforce Investment Act program.

Southeast Region staff attended the Colorado Blueprint Meeting in La Junta. The Governor addressed

questions from the audience surrounding manufacturing, agriculture, broadband, higher education, waste to energy and other sources of energy, water, and highway funding.

Southeast Region staff was invited to attend an open house at Chae Organics in Walsenburg. The Governor and our Executive Director were there to learn about the company and tour their Walsenburg facility that is currently under construction.

The Southeast Region assisted a Dislocated Worker who was laid off from the New Elk Mine. This person is a veteran and he collected unemployment insurance and also the extended benefits. He wanted to make himself more marketable for employment and decided to take the WorkKeys test to which he obtained a Gold Certificate. He also enrolled at Trinidad State Junior College in the Welding Program. He was able to take advantage of the Colorado Enhanced Approved Training Program (CEATP) during this time. He obtained a certificate for welding. He started looking for work outside of the Trinidad area as he had exhausted any potential employment in the area. His wife came in to report that he had found a job and a case manager was able to assist him with supportive services (travel, food and protective clothing to attend safety training in order to start his job). A major selling point in this person getting the job was the welding certificate. The position that he was hired for was derrick hand. This person will start off making \$20.00 an hour and after training he will earn \$24.00 an hour. This individual did send a thank you card to all of the Trinidad Workforce Center staff for their assistance.

The Southeast Region has entered into several On the Job Training contracts with Oliver Manufacturing in La Junta. Oliver Manufacturing is currently moving into a brand new, state of the art facility and expanding their workforce. These current contracts are for brand new positions and Oliver Manufacturing hopes to utilize Workforce Center programs, such as the Workforce Investment Act, as they continue to expand. Workforce Investment Act community outreach continues to be done in an effort to deliver the program information and its benefits to the employers and employees.

Southeast Colorado Workforce Center Staff performed Outreach in Pueblo Mesa area and in the Arkansas Valley. A flyer was provided inviting H2A employers to attend an informational seminar that will review the growers' responsibilities under the H2A program.

Southeast Workforce Center staff assisted with the Girls in the Middle Conference in Lamar. The theme of this year's conference was "You Grow Girl". There was a wide variety of different female speakers from a Navy Seal to an Engineering Professor from CSU Pueblo. The Keynote speaker was Renee Ziegler from Denver, CO who is a Navy Seal. There were 62 6th-8th grade girls attending this conference.

Southeast Region staff along with a local DVOP and Rural Consortium RVER toured the Chae Organics facility in La Veta. Staff learned about their products and processes as well as disseminated information to Chae about how the Workforce Center could assist them with their needs. Chae expressed thanks in the assistance and referrals that they have already received through the Workforce Center.

The Sterling staff prepared ICAP Interviews with approximately 25 local employers participating to conduct mock interviews with Sterling High School seniors. Partners from Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Yuma County Department of Social Services co-facilitated a workshop and conducted

mock interview skits for all seniors prior to the mock interviews with the employers.

The Sterling Workforce Center held a hiring event for Express Personnel, the subcontractor for a major road construction project in the area and also a manufacturing company in Sterling.

- Express Employment Professionals provided study guides and tested those who expressed interest in being a flagger
- Interviewed at the workforce center for both the flagging and manufacturing position
- Hiring offers were made to 43 people, 28 flaggers and 15 manufacturing positions.

In February, Fort Morgan staff presented a mini career coaching fair at the local alternative high school. The students from Lincoln High School were coached on application completion, resumes, work search and career seeking skills. Staff also met with representatives of Goodwill Industries of Denver to discuss partnering with their Get to Work program, specifically how Workforce and Goodwill might incorporate their employment programs and workshops.

The Eastern region is currently working on methods to improve and expand the usage of the Virtual Workforce Centers at the Library. The Consortium Director, Employment & Training Division Director and a representative from the Colorado State Library system will be presenting the Virtual Workforce Center at the Library tool to the NAWDP conference in May.

Congressman Udall
Congressman Bennet
Statewide

The Northwest regional Disabled Veteran Outreach Program lead has made several presentations throughout the region to establish and renew partnerships to be able to better provide services to our Veterans. The Veterans Administration TeleHealth Clinic in Glenwood Springs, American Legion Post #100 in Carbondale, Summit County Human Services, Steamboat Springs Veterans of Foreign Wars post commander, and Routt County Human Services all received information regarding workforce priority of service and other services and programs we can provide to Veterans.

Northwest regional staff is contacting 485 job seekers who recently lost extended unemployment benefits or ran out of benefits on a regular claim. Staff are providing these job seekers with information regarding all of the services their local workforce center can provide and encouraging them to discuss their employment goals with us for individualized guidance, services, and links to available workforce or community resources.

Steamboat Springs staff coordinated an employer workshop for "Social Media." Staff recruited a presenter who is based in Jackson Hole, WY but who works with businesses in Steamboat. The presentation covered email marketing as well as other social media sites and how to get started. A great deal of marketing, phone calls, in person visits and emails were sent and two employer representatives attended. Staff also attended the Colorado Mountain College Spring Resource Fair. Information regarding services and programs available at workforce centers was presented to approximately 15 students who attended the event.

Rangely staff participated in created a new description for Chamber Director and a new Director has

been successfully chosen from several candidates. Rangely workforce staff contributed greatly in recruitment and interviewing for the new position. Staff is collaborating closely with other members on the position parameters of the newly hired economic development director for the area and works closely with the group on economic development and workforce readiness. Rangely staff are also partnering with Colorado Northwestern Community College Internships class to present information regarding resume building, cover letters, interviewing, and the mock interviews following the creation of mock job openings. Eight students were assisted in the class on an individual basis several times in January.

Granby workforce staff was asked to coordinate and host a meeting of business Human Resources representatives throughout the Grand County area. Workforce staff sent information to area businesses via email blasts and contacted approximately 100 employers. The first meeting was held as a “bring your own lunch” meeting on January 23, 2014 in cooperation with the Grand County Library. Nine employer representatives attended this meeting including a Grand County Commissioner. The first meeting was organizational and getting to know each member and they will go over “What the Workforce Center Can Do for Employers” at the next meeting.

Meeker workforce staff has been working with the general contractor, Haselden Construction, regarding the new Pioneers Medical Center construction. There will be several sub-contractors and all will be placing local people in open positions. Meeker workforce is planning a Job Fair in March for five of the contractors hiring carpenters, laborers, electricians, plumbers and equipment operators.

On January 9, 2014, the Upper Arkansas Regional Supervisor met with Colorado Department of Corrections personnel at the Buena Vista Correctional Facility to review the results of the recent virtual job fair for Correctional Officers and Health Services Professionals sponsored by the Upper Arkansas Workforce Centers. A record-setting 3,000+ interested job seekers visited the Colorado Department of Corrections virtual job fair, with several on-line, real-time chats occurring between the Colorado Department of Corrections staff members and overseas service members currently serving in the Armed Forces in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The virtual job fair concept has been so successful for the Colorado Department of Corrections that new strategies are being considered to attract exiting service members to new careers in corrections.

D.G. Coleman, a transport company, transports water from the Mt. Princeton area to Denver for bottling. The Salida Workforce Center is hosting a virtual job fair in the near future for this company to hire qualified tanker drivers.

The Cañon City Workforce Center conducted an H2A farm inspection for a local agricultural company. Liptis Farms will be adding agricultural workers for their business and the Workforce Center has posted eight positions. The Workforce Center is also conducting a rapid response activity for a local company, Morgan Thermal Ceramics which is planning a move of their operations to another state, affecting approximately 24 workers.

The Upper Arkansas Regional Supervisor, along with the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium Director, attended the Royal Gorge Bridge and Park’s groundbreaking ceremony. The Royal Gorge Bridge and Park suffered a devastating loss due to wildfire in June 2013 destroying over 50 park structures. The groundbreaking is symbolic in the Park’s Phoenix-like rise from the ashes of catastrophe. The Park announced that it will start public tours in March and will have some new attractions ready for the public in August, 2014. The Cañon City Workforce Center is proud to be an active partner in the organization’s

employment and training rebuilding plan.

South Central Region staff attended the January, 2014 Monte Vista Agricultural Committee meeting. The committee has finalized the program agenda, speakers, vendors, sponsors, public announcements for the conference held in February in Monte Vista. The committee believes the conference was very successful and attendance of the conference was approximately at the same level as the 2013 conference.

Conejos Library in conjunction with the Alamosa Workforce Center will be interviewed by KGIW radio in March regarding the Universal On-Line Learning Program, upcoming job search and resume workshops that the Workforce Center will be presenting at the library.

The South Central Region is continuing efforts to develop and incorporate a "Soft Skills Tool Kit" for job seekers which will be beneficial for the South Central Region and can potentially benefit a number of areas throughout the State. The South Central Region is beginning a pilot of the Tool Kit by polling fifty job seekers on the Tool Kit Survey in order to determine their knowledge and skills in the areas of Job Success, Transferable Skills, Credibility/Integrity, and Behavior Skills. Once the job seeker completes the survey, staff will review the results and determine a plan for each job seeker to obtain training in the areas of need.